WHEN DAWN CAME AGAIN AFTER THE SHIP SANK

From the Swedish.

My friend Demorest was a tall, well built man, with a smooth face, gray eyes and blond hair streaked with white which enhanced the distinction of his pale, grave face—a face profoundly calm in expression, yet showing, in the deep lines about the mouth, traces of some great suffering through which he had lived in the past.

I had made his acquaintance at a dinner, and during the two months which I spent in his home city we became friends, and were so intimate that I always called at his rooms whenever my way took me into the neighborhood where he lived.

One evening, a few days before my departure, I knocked as usual at Demorest's door. As there was no response, I softly turned the knob, and stepped in, believing my friend to be in the inner room.

I found him standing motionless before the fireplace, sunk in contemplation of a picture from which the drapery that usually covered it had been drawn to one side. It showed the face of a woman with large violet eyes and features like those of a statue by Canova. The dress offset a neck of delicate beauty and a wealth of black hair. The painting was a masterpiece.

At my entrance Demorest awoke from his reverie with a start, and turned to me with a flush on his usually pale face. Apologizing for my intrusion, and explaining how it had been brought about, I was about to withdraw, when he asked me to remain. Noticing my quick, involuntary glance in the direction of the portrait, he said simply:

"My wife."

We sat for a while conversing on indifferent subjects, but a deep depression was evident in Demorest's manner. At last he rose, saying:

"I fear you find me a dull companion this evening, but I cannot help it, my friend. To-day is for me an anniversary. This night, seventeen years ago, I lost my wife."

I murmured the usual conventionalities, but he interrupted me:

"You think undoubtedly that I am morbidly sensitive on the subject of a loss of so long ago? The circumstances, however, are such that my wife's death will always haunt my memory with inexpressible horror. I rarely speak of the story, not wishing to be the object of general sympathy, but I will tell it to you.

"As I have said, it is now seventeen years ago. A few days earlier we had been married and almost immediately after we started for America on board the Arcadia.

"The voyage threatened to be stormy, but we were both used to the sea, and enjoyed every moment to the full. The only cloud in our heaven was Eleanor's uncontrollable fear of drowning. In the evening, when I swung myself into my berth, she used to say,

"'Edward, pray that the ship may not sink to-night.'

"I laughed at her and pointed out that the steamers of the company to which ours belonged never had any accidents, adding:

"'Do you not see, child, that all possible precautions are taken? There are lifeboats enough to hold all of us; and, even if we were left behind, these cork belts on the walls would insure our safety until we were picked up. Besides,' I concluded, 'I excel most men in swimming, and could without difficulty keep you above water from four to five hours, during which time we surely would be saved. Do not bother your little head about such things.'

"But she would not be convinced, and seemed oppressed by some sort of presentiment.

"One night we had retired as usual. The sea was fearfully agitated, and it was a long time before even I, hardened as I was, could find sleep. Suddenly I was awakened by Eleanor, calling.

"'Edward! Edward! What is happening?'

"I sat up and listened. A dull roar filled the ship—a pounding and splashing which drowned the noise of the propellers. I became anxious, and, jumping from my berth and telling Eleanor to remain in the stateroom, I hastened out into the passage. I ran into a pale and frightened passenger, whom I asked to tell me the cause of the turmoil.

"'The ship is foundering,' he cried. 'Has no one called you? The lifeboats are being manned.'

"I returned to our room, endeavoring to appear as unconcerned as possible, and found my wife in a state of terror.

"'My little wife,' I said, 'the curtain rises on your long expected drama. The steamer is sinking. There is, however, no cause for alarm; the worst that can befall us is a cold bath. Dress quickly—as lightly and warmly as possible.'

"Having dressed and fastened the cork belts around us, we went on deck.

"We had been forgotton. The last lifeboat was about to leave the ship. We called to the crew and jumped into the boat at the last moment.

"But we were too late. The deck of the Arcadia burst, with a loud report, and the ship sank, dragging our boat into the whirlpool. I had only time to take Eleanor in my arms before we found ourselves struggling for our lives amid the wreckage and thundering waves.

"The cork belt did good service. In the blackness of the night I could not see Eleanor's face, but I knew from her feverish grip on my arm that she still retained consciousness. During a lull in the storm I said to her:

"'It is only three or four hours till daybreak, and then some vessel will be sure to find us. You feel safe with me, dear?'

"Her voice came to me in the darkness:

"'Yes, Edward, I feel safe with you. But my belt is tied too hard; could you not loosen it? I cannot breathe.'

"I began at once, with one hand, to untie the belt, while, with the other, I held her above the water. Then a great wave rolled over us and tore her from my arms.

"I dived instantly and caught her by the hair as she was about to sink, and, carrying her back to the surface, I held her in a close embrace. She had lost consciousness and lay in my arms, a lifeless weight. Nothing but a faint beating of the heart and an occasional twitching of the cold lips, against which I pressed mine, assured me that my precious burden was still alive.

"What a night of horror! I was near losing my mind. My arms ached; my whole body was paralyzed with cold. Several times I was sinking into the sleep of death, but roused myself, calling: 'Eleanor, dearest, speak to me!' The only answer to my cry was the moaning of the storm.

"At last a faint streak of light appeared on the horizon. I thanked God that the night was past; and, feeling my strength renewed by hope, I bent over the motionless body in my arms.

"Slowly the sun rose over the water and the dawn broke. At the first pale ray vibrating over the ocean, I looked down into the face which had rested close to mine throughout the night.

"It was that of another woman."

WINNING HIT OF BULL THOMPSON.

Novel Play in Baseball Tried by the Strong Man of the Lightfoot Lilies to the Confusion of the Ringtail Roarers.

"So that's Mertes, the man they call Sandow," observed a fat fan, gazing at the Giants' piano-legged left fielder in the course of preliminary practice at the Polo Grounds. "Well, well, well. Not but that he's a tolerably husky looking young lad, mind you, but——

"Sandow? Why, say, friend, some of these present day strong guys would have looked like puny babes alongside of big Bull Thompson, who used to catch for the Lightfoot Lilies back in the old Jones county days.

"I can see the Bull just as if he were standing behind the plate there now. As the batter would face the pitcher the Bull would suddenly straighten up and draw in his breath until he was red in the face.

"Then, pop! would go the top button off his shirt, and while the batter was rubbing the back of his neck and wondering what in Jones county had struck him Dean Braley would shoot the ball over for as pretty a strike as ever split the plate. Some chest expansion had big Bull Thompson.

"And bat? Why, say, that man used to hit so everlastingly far that if the people over the State line hadn't been jealous of our nine they'd have made our opponents take out extradition papers before they'd let 'em field the ball back.

"But the Bull's slugging wasn't as advantageous to the Lilies as you might suppose. He soon acquired such a reputation with teams throughout that part of the country that the instant the batsman preceding him had been disposed of the outfielders would take it on the run for the furthermost ruffles on the outskirts of the city. In that way, with a slow pitcher and a good start, they were just as apt as not to get there in time to nab the Bull's hits.

"So the Bull, who was a man of brain as well as brawn, tried to vary his herculean swipes with an occasional well placed bunt to centre field. Such restraint of muscle, however, was little to his liking, and he sought for other means to baffle the fielders, who used to stand waist deep in the horizon awaiting his long ones.

"At last he solved the problem. Instead of driving the ball out over the diamond, he hit upon the plan of swinging his bat down on it and driving it onto the home plate.

"When he did this, the ball, under the impetus of his mighty blow, would rebound from the plate to such a height that before it came to earth again he'd have ample time to reach first base and sometimes even second.

"There was a stunt for you! They couldn't field him out, because the ball was in the air, and they couldn't hope to catch him out because it had got there on first bounce.

"I'll never as long as I live forget the way he foxed the Ringtail Roarers with that stunt.

"A mean drizzling rain that had been falling all morning made the diamond soggy and slow when the big game was called, but the thousands that had driven in from every corner of the State put postponement out of the question.

"The first time at bat the Bull let drive for one of his long ones over centre. Old Doc Quackenbush, who was umpiring, trained his fieldglasses on it and finally diagnosed the runner out twenty-six seconds after the ball had left his bat.

"In the third, with Slugger Burrows on third, the Bull resorted to his new trick and basted the ball down against the plate with a force that bounced it high enough to enable Slugger to score.

"In the fifth a similar plate bounder, only higher, brought in two runs.

"The Roarers' outfielders were still playing deep, as there was no telling when the Bull would take it into his head to shift tactics and wallop out one of his long shots.

"In fact, it took them so long to get in from their positions after the Bull had been at bat that the game was delayed considerably.

"When Bull Thompson came to bat in the last half of the ninth you could have heard a snowflake fall. The score stood 6 to 3 in favor of the Roarers, the Lilies had the bases full and two were out.

"What would the Bull do? Driving the ball down against the plate for a 50 foot bounce was sure to be good for a hit, but that would only bring in two men at the most, which would leave the Roarers still one run to the good, and Jim Timpson, the next man up, was almost a sure out.

"On the other hand, the Roarers' fielders were back beyond the town limits waiting expectantly for one of the Bull's long ones. What would the Bull do?

"Cy Priest, the Roarers' pitcher, drew his arm back, and a second later the ball was sailing square over the plate.

"Down whizzed the Bull's bat on it like a maternal slipper descending upon a wayward son, and—whack!

"The Bull was off like a flash for first and the man on third was tearing home.

"The Roarers rushed toward the plate to gather in the ball on its descent.

"'Where is it? Who sees it?' shouted Cy Priest, peering anxiously skyward.

"The runner on third dashed across the plate.

"'There it is! There it is!' cried the Roarers' catcher, dancing up and down and pointing excitedly.

"'Where? Where? Pahaw! that's only a bird!'

"A second fleeting Lily crossed the plate.

"'Where in thunder's that ball? Don't any one see it?' roared Priest, shading his eyes with his hands and gazing intently into the heavens.

"The third Lily crossed the plate, and the score was tied.

"By this time all the men, women and children were on their feet with heads back scanning the clouds for sign or sight of Thompson's hit.

"A moment later a mighty roar shook the stands, and the crowds began pouring out onto the field. Bull Thompson had completed the circuit with the winning run.

"'Give us room. Give us room,' said Cy Priest, motioning the crowd back. 'I'm going to stay here until that ball comes down. I don't believe he hit the darn thing at all.'

"The Bull merely shrugged his shoulders in an injured sort of way and gave the crowd one of those comical winks of his.

"Well, sir, those Ringtail Roarers must have gawked 'round there gazing up in the air for half an hour or more before Cy Priest finally gave the thing up as a bad job and happened to glance down at his feet.

"'Simplicity Jefferson!' he exclaimed with a start.

"There, not more than half a foot in front of the home plate, was a perfectly round hole about three inches in diameter.

"Yes, sir, you've guessed it. Instead of swatting that ball against the hard plate, where 'twould have bounded back up in the air, he'd pasted it down onto the soggy earth so hard that he'd driven it over two feet into the ground. We got it out with a pick next morning.

"Playing yet? No, the Bull got all bunged up in a runaway eight years ago and had to quit the game. Yanked the horses back with such a jerk that he pulled 'em clean over on top of him. Leg, both arms, three ribs and a collarbone busted.

"Last I heard of him he was down in Chihuahua making wigs for these Mexican hairless dogs."

A ROMANCE OF THE TERROR TOLD BY A PICTURE AND AN INKSTAND.

From the French.

"If you do not object," said my brother, throwing the stump of his cigar into the fire, "we will finish the partition to-day, so that the room may be put in order and closed."

I threw a glance around the little room in which we were sitting. It was the picture of desolation. The furniture was piled high, the paintings taken down, the carpet rolled up, and over all lay a thick covering of dust.

"The fact is, it is all so untidy," I murmured, rising.

"And so dismal," added Pierre.

I know nothing so sad as these unpleasant tasks after the death of a relative, when a thousand objects brought together during a lifetime are dispersed at the caprice of fate. There was, moreover, in our case a touch of emotion. The woman who had lived in this room had stood nearer to us by the ties of the heart than by those of blood. Our relationship was near enough to make us her heirs, but we had looked upon her rather as a sister.

For years we had come every day to pass an hour in this little sitting room with the woman whom illness had carried off a month ago. And now, when we returned, both Pierre and I shivered as with the chill of the grave, and made no progress in our task.

We began by lighting the fire. Then, at the first object we touched, Pierre said:

"Do you remember?"

And the thread of memories spinning itself between us, the end of the afternoon found us one on each side of the hearth, almost at the same point as at our arrival.

Nothing remained to divide but the art treasures, a thousand precious and graceful trifles which poor Marguerite had loved to see about her. We took them up with tremulous hands and heavy hearts, and my brother, who poses for a strong man, lighted cigarette after cigarette, and left them untouched, lying about on the furniture.

I made him accept a miniature Louis XVI. table, which I knew his wife coveted, and he, not to be behind me in generosity, handed me a charming picture which I had contemplated out of the corner of my eye.

It was a family portrait, the likeness of a young grandaunt guillotined in 1793, a beautiful pastel and, upon my word, a lovely model.

The woman was about 20. She was dressed in white, with a rose in her blonde hair and a ribbon round her neck—that slender neck which the guillotine was to embrace. She was leaning on the corner of a table as if writing—evidently a contrivance of the artist merely for the pleasure of reproducing a handsome inkstand of wrought silver standing on the velvet cover.

O, Aunt Luce, to whom were you writing, with your slender hand and penetrating glance, and your smile, a little sad, as if you had foreseen your premature end? Our family traditions, corroborated by memoirs from the pen of an old servant, tell us that you could have lived had you willed it. An officer of the Republic fell in love with your grace and your smile and snatched you from the steps of the scaffold; but you fled from his arms, crying: "I wish to die!" Aunt Luce, what despair filled your heart?

The door opened, and Cousin Leon, the antiquary of the family, entered. We had, in fact, asked him to come and examine certain objects, of the value of which we were completely ignorant.

"Beautiful! Who painted it?" he said as his eyes fell on the picture.

"We do not know. It is not signed; there is only the date, 1788."

"Whoever the painter may be, it is delightful! To which of you will it belong?"

"To me; Pierre has given it to me."

"I congratulate you."

Leon put down the portrait cautiously, and we led him to a little collection of antique ivories. While handling the fragile statuettes, he muttered unintelligibly to himself, and all of a sudden he said aloud:

"Where the devil have I seen an inkstand like the one in the picture?"

He seemed to ponder; evidently his mind was at work. At last he cried:

"By Heaven! I knew that I had seen it!"

"Seen what?" we asked in unison.

"Why, this inkstand. I have it myself. To be sure! I remember it all now. Your grandfather—God save his soul—had no taste for artistic things, and made me a present of a number of antique snuff boxes and other trifles for my collection, among which was the inkstand. Listen, my boy. Since you have the portrait, I will give you the inkstand. The two should be reunited."

The following day he sent me the inkstand. It was of exquisite workmanship, in the style of the time: A Cupid mounted on a dolphin. Without any doubt, it was Aunt Luce's inkstand.

One morning I set myself the task of cleaning it. I had to rub hard. The dust and moisture had tarnished it, and spots of ink refused to be effaced.

As I shook it to remove the dust from the well one of the dolphin's fins fell back and disclosed a hollow. It was probably the receptacle for seals and such things. A piece of paper fell from it.

I unfolded it in a tremor of curiosity. It was a piece cut in haste from a gazette, in which were given the names of the bodyguards massacred on the 10th of August. One of the names was underlined, and the last fold of the yellowed paper contained a lock of black hair.

Aunt Luce, Aunt Luce, I know now why you wished to die; and I, your great-grandnephew, born in a century in which one is not susceptible to emotions, must have wept over your love of old—for a tear has made a new spot on the chiselings of the inkstand.

AN UNEXPECTED GUEST AND A TEST OF FRIENDSHIP

From the German.

Herr Gundermann had retired from business and had bought a small estate near the city, on which he lived contentedly with his wife and daughter. His activity as a farmer was rewarded by rich returns, which, however, were not necessary to him, for he could live comfortably on his income.

Gundermann had a wide circle of acquaintances; and, now that he had retired, it was only natural that his friends should visit him at Sorgenfrei. It was equally natural that the host, out of hospitality and also for his own gratification, should treat his guests to refreshments.

Though the stream of visitors was limited to Sundays and holidays, it soon became so large that he was obliged to use the entire produce of the week, as well as all his stores of fruit, for the entertainment of his friends. This, of course, set the tongues of the neighbors wagging. One morning he found the entrance to his garden decorated with the sign, "Coffee Free to Consumers."

But as this state of affairs had come about gradually, like his gray hairs, he had become accustomed to it long before he realized the burden which he had allowed to be placed upon his back.

One Sunday afternoon the grounds in front of the house presented as usual the appearance of a much frequented café, and Herr Gundermann and his family had all they could do to provide their guests with refreshments. Suddenly, above the chatter, a voice of thunder shouted:

"What the devil is the matter with the service in this miserable café?"

The voice was that of a stranger who, misled by the sign over the entrance, had taken a seat at a table in order to partake of a light meal. Herr Gundermann hastened to provide the ungracious guest with the desired food, laughing all the while in his sleeve over the surprise in store for the stranger.

At length the latter finished his meal and rapped on the table with his stick. The host went up to the stranger.

When Herr Gundermann explained that he was glad to have made the acquaintance of his guest, but that this was no café, the man gave a slight start, but immediately recovered his self-possession, and said courteously:

"My dear sir, I am grateful for your kindness. Allow me to express my sincere admiration of your generosity. I am, however, ready to wager that none of these people who are eating your bread and honey would take any more notice of you than if you were an empty beehive should you ever need their assistance. Try them for once. And now, good-by, sir."

With these words he handed his host a card, bowed and went. Gundermann looked after him and muttered something in his beard, but he was soon obliged to return to his guests, and had no time to ponder over the stranger's words.

It was not until late in the evening, when the last caller had departed, that Herr Gundermann found an opportunity to tell his family the adventure with the stranger.

"If I only knew who he is!" he said. "It was certainly a peculiar way of expressing his thanks. By Jove, I have his card! Here it is. 'Dr. Sauerklee, Counsellor-at-Law.' In return for the food he gave me the unvarnished truth to swallow! Well, he is not entirely wrong—what do you think, wife?"

"I think he is entirely right. Frankly, I had enough of it long ago."

"No less had I; but how to get out of it without vexation? Perhaps I shall have some inspiration in my sleep. By the way, Gretchen, was Dr. Baldrian here?"

"Certainly," answered the daughter; "but he went away after a short call. He had to visit a patient."

"I wonder why it is that I cannot endure the young man. He has never done me any harm."

The daughter suddenly recollected that she was needed in the kitchen.

The expected inspiration seemed actually to have come during the night; for the next day Herr Gundermann sat down to write, and, chuckling to himself, drew up the following letter:

MY DEAR FRIEND: Embarrassing circumstances drive me to ask your help. I have recently suffered great financial losses, which, unless I succeed in covering them otherwise, will force me to part with my estate. I therefore implore you to inform me if you feel inclined to come to my assistance with your large resources. Asking you to consider this communication confidential, I remain yours faithfully, HYACINTH GUNDERMANN.

"There," the writer said, contentedly "that will do it. A dozen copies or so, and we shall see if the lawyer really hit the nail on the head."

The next Sunday Herr Gundermann's house was deserted. Only toward evening did a visitor appear—the young physician.

Gundermann welcomed him kindly, but was rather taken aback when the young man asked for a private interview. He was still more astonished when the doctor told him that he had heard of the bad turn affairs had taken, and as he had inherited a small fortune begged that Mr. Gundermann would dispose of it.

"Who has told you this story?" asked the old man.

"Great heavens! It is the talk of the town that you will soon be obliged to sell your estate."

Gundermann laughed heartily.

"Give me your hand, doctor," he said. "I thank you just as warmly as if I actually needed to take advantage of your offer. It is all a false report, however. I simply dabbled, for once, in your profession, and felt people's pulses, and they show me their tongues without being asked."

It was dark when the doctor rose to take his leave, after having been cordially invited by his host to come again soon, which he gladly promised to do. Gretchen followed him with a light. A considerable space of time elapsed before she returned.

"The doctor must have been very careful not to let you become overheated," chuckled her father. "You must have stopped to rest after every step."

"I was obliged to go with him to the gates. Fingal had been let loose. He does not know the doctor, and——"

"Well, I must admit that the doctor is a fine fellow, and I shall be glad to see him here often. But I am rather curious as to the outcome of his visits. What do you think of them, Gretchen?"

For reply, the girl hid her blushing face on his breast.

A HOUSE BUILT ALL IN A DAY

INDIANAPOLIS, Sept. 3.—The unusual feat of building a five room cottage, including foundation, plastering and putting on one coat of paint, in a day of ten hours with a cost to the owner of nothing more than a chicken dinner for the workmen, outside of the material, was performed this week in the little hamlet of Maple Grove, near Evansville. The man for whom the cottage was built is Homer Rose and the men who did him the kindness were fellow employees. The work was superintended by Dee Bacher, a contracting carpenter.

Mr. Rose has had lumber and other material on the ground for months. After these were bought he discovered that he could not go on with his house for lack of means. Mr. Bacher called his men around him one evening and asked for volunteers for one day to build the Rose cottage. Many thought it would be impossible to build it in one workday, but the contractor declared that he could accomplish the feat if the men in his employ would do the work. Twenty-six carpenters, masons and painters agreed to give one day if Mr. Rose would furnish a chicken dinner, and a time was fixed when all should report at the site of the proposed building.

Every man appeared on time. The brick masons went to work laying the foundation, while the carpenters busied themselves in cutting the joists, studding and sills. Every man was assigned to a particular part of the work, and the house began to go up in a rush. Hundreds of persons gathered about and watched the workmen. Each of the latter urged his fellows on, and when noon came the frame work was all up and the chimney had been started.

Then came the dinner. Mrs. Rose, assisted by some of her neighbors, had fried two dozen chickens. There were ten loaves of bread, four dozen ears of boiled corn, nearly a bushel of mashed potatoes and, bowl after bowl of gravy. The dessert consisted of peach cobbler and various kinds of pies. The contractor had to call off his men for fear that they would eat so much that they would not be able to finish the job.

As soon as the frames were set for the windows and doors the sashes were fitted and the lights put in. By this time, however, the laths had been put on inside, and the sheeting and weather boarding was being placed on the outside and the chimney was being run up by the masons, all at the same time. Before the roof was on the plasterers were at work, and exactly at 6 o'clock the cottage was finished, all but the second coat of paint, and the skim coat of plaster, neither of which could be put on before the first coat had dried.

Mr. Bacher complimented his men when the job was complete. He said that while he had done some "hurry" work in his time he had never known a house to be begun and completed in a day. The cottage contains five well lighted rooms and a large attic. Everything, even to putting on the hinges and locks, was done before the men were called off at 6 o'clock, and Mr. Bacher declares that he could have completed the work an hour earlier had not the men eaten so freely at dinner.

CAUGHT TROUT IN HIS TROUSERS

It was a cool August night on the edge of a wild little Adirondack stream, and half a dozen men were gathered round the camp fire. One, a visitor from a neighboring camp, had listened to three or four fish stories with interest and apparent credulity, when he said:

"I've a story that beats all of yours, I think. It was two years ago when I was up here in the back country with my gun, but no fishing rod.

"I happened to cross a stream just where it narrowed to a mere thread, and as I looked into the pool behind the narrowest point I saw that it fairly swarmed with trout. The more I looked at 'em the more I felt I couldn't leave 'em.

"But how to get 'em out of the water was the puzzle. I'd heard of tickling trout, but I didn't like the idea of scaring 'em with any such experiment. Then I had an idea.

"I was miles from any house or public road. So I just slipped off my trousers, tied 'em at the ankles, and spread the balloon part, mouth open, right across the narrowest part of the stream.

"In a minute that whole trout stream was neatly flowing out through them. Then I went back of the pool and scared the fish down stream.

"In a little while my trousers were alive with bewildered trout. A few found their way out as I gathered the garment close, but I pulled out those trousers with at least forty pounds of fish inside 'em.

"I strung the fish, wrung my trousers, and tramped home to camp. Some of those trout weighed more than twenty-five ounces, and none was much under a pound."

When the visitor's story was finished, nobody expressed surprise, and the host silently handed him a flask and the biggest cup within reach. The stranger took a good drink, said "So long" and went off to his own camp.

His guide stayed behind, and with the easy familiarity of his profession said to the assembled company:

"Gents, mebbe you think that story ain't so. Now, I wasn't guidin' fer the Cap in them days, but I happened along just when he was gettin' ready to set his trousers. I reckon I could'a' had the law on him for nettin' trout, but I didn't. I was too much astonished to see the way he got that mess of fish. Yes, gents, that story's true."

Here the speaker cast an eloquent glance at the flask of the host, but the latter made no responsive motion, and the guide a moment later melted into the shadow that had just swallowed his veracious employer.

THE PRIEST WHO WON A BET ON A HORSE RACE WITHOUT KNOWING IT

"When somebody told me the other day that Merces, the two-year-old trick that won a good race at Saratoga with the chalk at 10 to 1, belonged to a New England clergyman, I dozed back a little stretch of fifteen years and dreamed there for a while," remarked a veteran trainer, who was better acquainted with Artful's great-grandsire Hindoo than he is with the winner of this year's Futurity.

"One of the characters of the old St. Louis Fair Grounds track during the '80s was Bricky McSweeney, whose freckles were as red as his hair. Nobody was ever able to figure it out how Bricky got by. He was never known to win a bet, although it was a matter of common notoriety that he would bet as high as $2 whenever he could get the 2. But he was a good natured Jonah man and he never lost his belief that some old day he would be there with enough of the sepia papers to paper a city schoolhouse.

"Bricky had the privileges of the track, because he was always possessed of some kind of badge horse. All of Bricky's badge horses were, of course, gift plugs. They'd be left behind by departing owners at the termination of the racing season.

"Whenever an owner would try time and again to poke one of his no accounts into the money, only to have the skate fall down every time his kidding friends would hand him the suggestion, 'Bricky McSweeney's waiting for that one,' and so it happened that for eight straight years Bricky was never without some kind of a hoofed thing in his shed entitling him to get in at the gate and to move around in the paddock.

"Bricky's finish was sudden.

"One afternoon in the summer of '89 he was standing at the paddock gate leading out on to the track just as the horses in a big field of maidens were turning into the stretch. An old blind she-hound that had been the pet of the stables since the days of her puppyhood doddered out of the to and started to cross the track.

"A hundred stable hands yelled at the old dog, but they yelled so hard that they scared her, and she stood paralyzed plumb in the middle of the track, and the big field of horses, already close to the wire, bearing down upon her at full speed. The blind she-hound had been a pal of Bricky's for a good many years, and he wasn't going to see her pounded into pulp under the hoofs of the horses.

"So, just as the horses were speeding under the wire, only fifty yards away, Bricky, against the warning cries of the whole bunch huddled at the paddock gate, hopped out on to the track, caught the old dog around her middle, and, putting all of his power into his arms, tossed her over the infield rail, and she lit, unhurt, on the soft grass.

"Bricky was just turning to make the few leaps for the paddock gate when the first of the pulling up horses hit him and knocked him down, and then about ten of the eighteen maidens trampled on him. When the stable hands carried him to the paddock enclosure it didn't take any expert eye to see that Bricky was about to make a quick cash-in.

"One of the stable hands loped for a priest. The priest's cottage, alongside his little church, was only about a quarter of a mile from the track entrance, and the kindly old man of the cloth was leaning over the gasping Bricky just about in time.

"Bricky was a Catholic, and the priest anointed him. The administration of the final sacrament was scarcely finished before Bricky's freckled face spread into one of his ear to ear grins, and he nodded to the old priest to bend his ear a bit closer. The priest did so.

"'Father,' whispered Bricky, still grinning, 'I hain't got no kin, so I'll leave my hoss to you.'

"Then Bricky cracked his last joke, with death only about a minute away from him.

"'He hain't much of a horse, father,' he gasped, 'but you can melt him down an' git some tallow candles f'r th' altar out o' him at that,' and then Bricky's eyelids fluttered a bit, and he piped out.

"All hands around the track chipped in to give Bricky something better than decent burial, at which the old priest who had closed Bricky's eyes officiated. After they'd laid Bricky away I rode back from the cemetery with the priest, as benign and gentle souled a silver haired man from the old dart as you ever met.

"'What was this the poor lad was saying to me about a horse?' the old priest asked me on the drive in.

"I couldn't help but smile at the question.

"'Well, I guess Bricky had it about right as to the altar candles, father,' I said, and then I went ahead and told him something about the kind of horses Bricky had always been the proprietor of.

"'I don't just remember the turtle he had last,' I said, 'but I'll find out when I reach the track and take a look at him, and maybe I'll be able to sell him for you to some fellow with a milk route.'

"The priest thanked me for my interest and said he'd be obliged to me if I'd take charge of the horse until it was decided if anything could be done with the mutt. When I got to the track I strolled over to the out of the way barn where the harrow mules and day laboring workhorses of the track were quartered, to have a peek at the late Bricky's season admission crab.

"Well, the horse kind o' surprised me. I'd seen the makings of a lot worse glue than that fellow go to the races and get something.

"He was a four-year-old maiden, but one of those years couldn't be counted against him, for he had belonged to Bricky since the preceding autumn, and hadn't been raced in his four-year-old form. Hadn't been raced much as a three-year-old, either, I remembered, being looked upon as no account.

"I dug up the dope on the horse, tracing him back through all of his races, and it wasn't such awful dope. There were always some horses behind him, anyway. He was pretty cleverly bred at that.

"I found him there with the work horses, gross and high and unkempt and uncared for, but the poor devil of a neglected castoff thoroughbred had some good lines about him and a breadth between the eyes that betokened his possession of a lot of patience and strong sense. When I stepped into his box to get the feel of him, he knew right off that I wasn't a harrow driver or stable mechanic—the kind of two-footed company he'd been obliged to put up with for so long—but a handler of blood runners of the tribe to which he knew he belonged, and it kind o' got me lumpy around the neck when he rested his muzzle against the top button of my vest and looked up at me with his big, wistful, patient lamps. Felt sorry for the old weed-out, blamed if I didn't.

"'Anyhow, I'm going to give you a little run for your taw agate, bo,' I said to the old maiden, and then he nodded his head up and down and looked sort o' grateful and pleased.

"I led him by his halter over to my own shed. That evening I took a bit of a walk over to the old priest's cottage to tell him that the horse Bricky had bequeathed to him wouldn't be sold to a fellow with a milk route for a little while yet. He asked me why not, but I kind o' ducked that by telling him that I didn't know any milk people, and then switched the subject

"I took a look out of the tail of my eye at the old priest's surroundings. He was only just getting by, and that's all, I could see. Had a little church about the size of a summer kitchen out there on the edge of St. Loo, and even that was mortgaged, along with the cottage he lived in.

"He was one of those good old men of the cloth that they're always sending off somewhere to start something, just as soon as he's built up a congregation an' got it to prospering. He was the whole works, I found out—ran the church, taught the parochial school, instructed the sodalities, ran the Sunday school, buried the dead, married the willing, christened the new ones, and all on an income that wouldn't have kept some jockeys I know in cigarettes for a week.

"The next morning, with a bing and a rattle, I started to work on Bricky's four-legged bequest. Tacked him on to my string and labored with him.

"The fat fell away from him in no time, and he was a hog for work. In about three weeks he was in shape to show me something on the easy side. He did it right willingly, at that—passed me up a mile in 1:50 without any distress.

"I gave him his daily speeding then for another couple of weeks, and at the end of that time he breezed me the mile in 1:45 without being let down by the heavy boy on his back. When he got through doing that I gave him a slap on the nigh haunch, and, says I to him:

"'Bud, I'm going to run you to help out the square and white old man that buried your pal, Bricky, and I want you to behave. How 'bout it?'

"The old maiden blinked his eyes rapidly and tossed his head and pawed the ground, and he couldn't have said it any plainer in words that he was going to make the dog-gonedest stab he knew how.

"I had to wait another week before I had a chance to stuff him into a field made up of a dozen four-year-old maidens.

"Couple of days before the race I slipped over to the old priest's cottage. Found him pacing up and down in his ridiculously tiny garden beside his cottage, in his cassock, and reading his breviary.

"'Ever have the horse bug very hard, father?' I asked him, and when I explained what that meant he smiled and called me a limb of darkness.

"'Because,' I went on, 'one of your stable is going to hunt for the coin day after to-morrow, and I want you to call all dates off on that afternoon and come over to the track and watch him cop.'

"Had to get out the glossary to straighten that out for the good old man, too. Well, he was enormously pleased to hear that I had taken Bricky's horse up and got him keyed for a race with his own class.

"'I thought some of running him in your name, father,' I went on, just to get a rise out of him, for I'd never had such an idea, 'but——'

"'I'm glad you didn't do that, my son,' he broke in alarmed. 'It might be misunderstood, and——'

"'Well, when I was in Ireland a few years ago,' I broke in on him, 'it seemed to me as if half the steeplechase horses I saw perform belonged to men of your faith and cloth. It was Father This's lepper here and Father That's 'chaser there.'

"'Oh, I know that, my son,' said the old priest, a twinkle in his eye. 'In fact, when I was a young man back in the ould country, I meself knew the leg of a horse as well as the—but, tush! It's been many the year since I allowed meself to participate in such frivolity.'

"'Well,' I said, 'we want you to be on the stand, anyhow, day after to-morrow. Coming, ain't you?'

"I could see the hankering in the good old man's eye to see a race. It had probably been forty years since he'd seen a bunch of 'em coming into the stretch—'way back yonder in the mist of the flown years when he was a young fellow in Ireland.

"'I can't see any evil in it,' he replied, after a long pause. 'As a looker on, but no participant.'

"'Your horse is going to win, father,' I said then, and I felt confident of it at that. 'Er—uh—the boys are kind o' talking of chipping in—each man just a little bit, you understand—and getting down a bet for you, just for the sake of sentiment.'

"'That must not be,' said the old priest earnestly. 'You must stop that. If the horse earns anything by his own effort, well and good, and may he run and win for the glory of God. But no gambling in my name. I depend upon you to stop that.'

"All the same, about a dozen of the trainers around the grounds quietly chipped in enough to make up a $100 betting bundle and passed it over to me. I'd told 'em what a hard fight the old priest was having of it to keep his flock together, and, besides that, I passed them the straight word that the badge maiden that had belonged to the dead Bricky was going to connect.

"On the day of the race I escorted the old priest over to the track, and found him a seat away up on the top tier of the grand stand. Then I went down and saddled the horse, for he was to go in the first race.

"I put the jockey up and gave him his instructions, and then I returned to the grand stand to join the priest. I had got the $100 down on his horse at 50 to 1.

"It was a mile race and the field started directly opposite the stand, across the field. When the barrier flashed it stuck on one side, and nine of the twelve horses went off to the false break, the starter and the assistant starter yelling at the boys with all their lungs.

"But the whole nine went the entire route and fought the finish out to the wire, when they were called back to the starting post. The old priest's horse wasn't among those nine, and then I knew that he had only two horses to beat, and those two, providentially, the worst of the entire lot.

"'Well,' I said to the kindly old man then—and he looked tremendously excited—'I'm mighty glad your horse didn't get away with that fool bunch. I'd hate to have you lose $5,000 on such a fluke.'

The old gentleman stared at me.

"'Five thousand dollars?' he exclaimed. 'What $5,000?'

"'Why,' said I—and may I be forgiven for that bald lie—'the amount of the stakes in this race, you know. This is the Missouri Industrial Stakes that your horse is running in, and the first horse home gets the five thousand as his share. I thought you knew that all the time.'

"I got by with it all right. He never read the papers—didn't have time—and he didn't know a four-year-old maiden race for mutts from a drill for mustangs.

"I hadn't any sooner made the explanation to him than the flag flashed for a square start, and the three horses that hadn't worn themselves out by the false dash around the track rocketed to the front in the first twenty yards, the old priest's in front. At the turn into the stretch he shook those two off like a tug shaking a scow and romped home thirty lengths to the good.

"That was the first and only time I ever saw a dignified old man of the cloth flacking his arms like a stable hand waving a blanket in the infield and trying all he knew to yell his tonsils down level with his palate. I was looking at him and laughing, when he caught my expression, and sat down sheepishly.

"'Heaven forgive me for a sinful old man,' he said, mopping his brow, 'but, praise be! did ye iver see a rogue of a horse thravel so fast in all the life av ye?'

"A lot of us went over to the old priest's cottage that evening. I had the $5,000 with me, and when I counted out the 'first money of the Missouri Industrial Stakes' to him it was worth a good deal more to see his face.

"He made a humorous speech, announcing his permanent retirement from the racing game, and presenting his entire stable to me. I won nearly a dozen good and profitable races with Bricky's badge horse during the next two years, but none of them gave me so much satisfaction as the one the willing nag copped when he was first home in the phony 'Missouri Industrial Stakes.'"